DARK HORSE COMICS
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2 OF 3
FROM THE PAGES OF THE GOON
BUZZARD
BY ERIC POWELL
★ ALSO FEATURING ★
BILLY THE KID'S
OLD TIMEY ODDITIES
BY POWELL AND HOTZ
DIRECT SALES
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BUZZARD

NUMBER TWO

BY ERIC POWELL
COLORS BY DAVE STEWART
LETTERS BY ERIC POWELL & NATE PIEKOS

BILLY THE KID'S
OLD TIMEY ODDITIES
& THE PIT OF HORRORS

PART TWO OF THREE

BY ERIC POWELL AND KYLE HOTZ
COLORS BY DAN BROWN
LETTERS BY NATE PIEKOS AT BLAMBOT®

COVER ART BY ERIC POWELL

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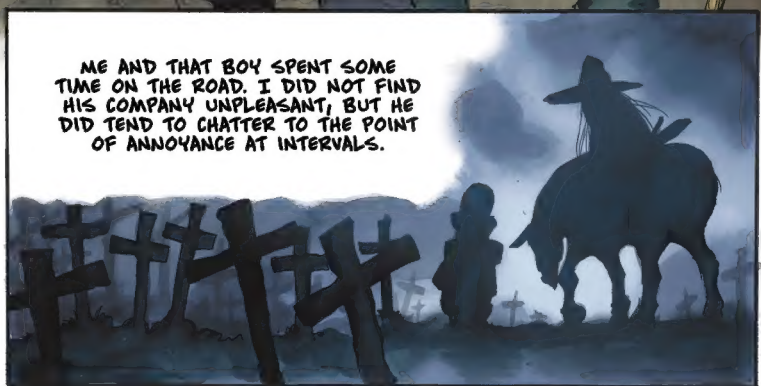
ME AND THAT BOY SPENT SOME TIME ON THE ROAD. I DID NOT FIND HIS COMPANY UNPLEASANT, BUT HE DID TEND TO CHATTER TO THE POINT OF ANNOYANCE AT INTERVALS.

ARE... ARE YOU REALLY DEATH, OR ARE YOU JUST A MAN?
I WAS JUST A MAN. SOME TIME AGO. I'M JUST A BUZZARD NOW.

...AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?!
I SHOT THEM. I SHOT ALL OF THEM.
GOLLY. BUT SOUNDS LIKE THEY WAS TOUGH AND VICIOUS MEN?
A MAN DON'T NEED TO ACT TOUGH IF HE IS. MEN THAT PUT ON A SHOW ARE SPINELESS MORE OFTEN THAN NOT.
YOU MUST BE REAL TOUGH THEN. YOU DON'T BLUSTER.
NO, I AIN'T TOUGH.

DID YOU LIKE BEING A SHERIFF?
AT FIRST. AT THE END... AT THE END THE RESPONSIBILITY PROVED UNREWARDING.
IF YOU WERE MY SHERIFF, I'D NEVER BE AFRAID.
SO WHY ARE YOU AN ASSASSIN NOW?
THAT'S ENOUGH QUESTIONS.

MY DADDY IS DEAD. HE WAS DRUG OFF BY THE MANGLED FOLKS. HE AIN'T HERE TO LEARN ME A TRADE, SO I'M NOT OF NO USE TO MY PEOPLE.
THAT'S WHY THEY SENT ME OFF WITH YOU. IT DON'T MATTER TO THEM IF I DIE.
YOUR PEOPLE AIN'T TOO BRIGHT.
I WAS WONDERING IF MAYBE YOU MIGHT TEACH ME A TRADE? THEN I MIGHT BE WORTH SOMETHING.
I DON'T KNOW NOTHING. I GOT NO TRADE OF MY OWN TO TEACH.
YOU KNOW KILLING.
YOU COULD TEACH ME THE ASSASSIN TRADE.

YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO KILL A MAN?
THERE YOU GO. JUST PULL THE TRIGGER. THAT'S ALL THE EDUCATION YOU NEED.
ANY COWARD CAN PULL A TRIGGER AND TAKE ANOTHER MAN'S LIFE. YOU WANNA SEE A MAN'S BRAINS BLOWED OUT?! THAT IT?!
BLAM

THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO FOR A LIVING?!
YOU AIN'T DEAD!
IT AIN'T FOR LACK OF TRYING, I CAN ASSURE YOU!

I'M SORRY I MADE YOU MAD.
I WOULD NEVER WANT TO SHOOT NO GOOD MEN. BUT THERE ARE EVIL ONES. AND THEM MONSTERS THAT EAT MY PEOPLE. I WOULDN'T MIND SHOOTING THEM, I RECKON.
THEY IS MORE LIKELY THAN NOT TO KILL ME ANYWAY.

CLEAN THAT.
YOU'LL NEED TO GET USED TO THE WEIGHT AND ACTION.

AHHH!

SNAKE HANDLERS!
WHAT'S THAT?
SNAKE HANDLERS! THEY WORSHIP A GIANT SNAKE THEY SAY LIVES IN THE MIST OF THE MOUNTAINS! THEY DANCE AROUND AND SHAKE HANDFULS OF POISONOUS SNAKES ABOUT!
BEST TO STEER CLEAR. THEY AIN'T RIGHT.
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HAVING CONNIPTIONS!
NO! LET ME GO!
AND LO DID THE SERPENT COME DOWN FROM HIS LOFTY SEAT AND SPEAK UNTO HECTUS! AND HECTUS RECEIVED THE WORD AND REPAID THE SERPENT WITH A SACRIFICE IN BLOOD!

WHAT'S THAT?! WHAT ARE THEY DOING WITH THAT FEMALE?!
THE SNAKE HANDLERS SACRIFICE FOLKS.
THIS HERE IS YOUR FIRST LESSON, BOY.
IF YOU'RE OUTNUMBERED, YOU'LL WANT TO THIN THE HERD SOME WITH SOMETHING THAT'S MORE ACCURATE AT LONG SHOOTING--
--BEFORE SWITCHING TO THE PISTOLS AT CLOSE RANGE!

BUT BE QUICK TO SWITCH TO THE KNIFE WHEN YOUR REVOLVERS RUN DRY!
PLEASE! DON'T KILL ME!
I AIN'T KILLING YOU, WOMAN!
HOW DID YOU END UP WITH THEM SNAKE HANDLERS, MA'AM?!

I'M THE CONCUBINE OF A MARSHAL IN THE EAST. I WAS SOLD. TO WHOM, I DON'T KNOW. THEY JUST SHOVED ME IN A WAGON.
THE WAGON WAS ATTACKED ON THE RIDGE BY THESE PEOPLE. EVERYONE ELSE IN THE WAGON IS ALREADY DEAD. WHO ARE--
OH MY GOD! CANNIBALS! YOU'RE GOING TO EAT ME!
OH, HUSH UP!
IT'S JUST HIS WAY, MA'AM. HE WON'T HARM YOU.

LET'S TAKE OFF, BOY. THESE FOLKS MIGHT HAVE MORE KIN ABOUT.
WHAT ABOUT ME?!
I'D KEEP MY HEAD DOWN AND HEAD ON BACK EAST IF I WAS YOU.
YOU'RE JUST GOING TO LEAVE ME HERE ALONE?!
MAYBE SHE SHOULD COME WITH US?
I AM TOO OLD AND YOU ARE TOO YOUNG TO BE TRAVELING WITH NO HALF-NAKED FEMALE!
I WON'T BE ANY TROUBLE! I PROMISE!

FINE. IT'S YOUR CHOICE. BUT YOUR HIDE IS NOT MY CONCERN. LIKELY TO BE SAFER FOR YOU IF YOU HEADED BACK EAST.
IT'S OKAY. I'LL PROTECT YOU. I'M AN APPRENTICE ASSASSIN.

TO BE CONCLUDED

IHR TEUFEL! IHR WOLLT MICH AN DEN BAUM GEFESSELT ZURÜCKLASSEN, ODER? IHR WOLLT MICH EURER HEXE OPFERN!*
*DEVILS! YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE ME TIED TO THIS TREE, AREN'T YOU?! YOU ARE GOING TO SACRIFICE ME TO YOUR WITCH!
I WISH I KNEW WHAT THAT FELLA WAS GOIN' ON AND ON ABOUT.
I SUSPECT IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ANYTHING PLEASANT. LET'S DEPART THIS PLACE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.
BILLY THE KID'S OLD TIMEY ODDITIES & THE PIT OF HORRORS
PART TWO
BY POWELL & HITT

MR. KID, THERE'S A SCARY-LOOKING WOMAN STANDING OVER THERE!

MY BABY IS HUNGRY.
ARE YOU ONE OF THE PARTY THAT WAS ATTACKED? ARE YOU INJURED?
MY BABY IS HUNGRY.
WHERE IS YOUR CHILD, MADAME?
MY BABY IS HUNGRY.
DER TEUFEL!
MY BABY IS HUNGRY!

POW
POW
YOU DID THIS ON PURPOSE, SPROULE! YOU'RE ALWAYS DRAGGIN' ME SOMEWHERE WITH SOME UNNATURAL CHICANERY GOIN' ON!
I ASSURE YOU I HAD NO PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF A FLYING TORSO INHABITING THIS FOREST!
IF YOU DID, I SURE WISH YOU WOULD HAVE LET ME IN ON THE JOKE!
SKRCHH

A BABY! A PLAYMATE FOR MY SON!
NO!
NO, YOU MIGHT HIT THE BOY! YOUR BULLETS HAD NO EFFECT ON THAT SPECTER, ANYWAY!
C'MON! THEY'RE GETTIN' AWAY!

CALLAHAN, WOULD YA MIND RUNNIN' BACK TO THE WAGON AND FETCHIN' ME SOME ROPE?

LOOK, MY PRECIOUS, MOMMY HAS BROUGHT YOU A FRIEND!
IT'S SO NICE OF YOU TO COME PLAY WITH MY PRECIOUS. HE HAD A FRIEND ONCE, BUT HE PLAYED WITH HIM TOO HARD.

TO BE CONTINUED...

JULY 2010

HORSEPOWER!

LOVE AND WONDER ARE TWO WORDS WE BELIEVE IN AT DARK HORSE MANGA—you might say we believed in them long before it was fashionable. Back in 1994, there was this home-video commercial that expressed the image of "manga" in the early nineties, for it featured a mascot named "Manga Man." Manga Man wasn't, as you might assume, big eyed and tousle haired. He looked more like a *Judge Dredd* villain—bald, scarred, teeth clenched, one eye covered by a monocle with cross hairs—and he screamed "*MAIN-GAH!!!*"—shifting his vowels and striking terror.

So now you can understand that when, sixteen years ago, Dark Horse premiered what is to this day our longest-running series, Kosuke Fujishima's *Oh My Goddess!*—with its saga of a nice-guy college student, and his beautiful and literally divine girlfriend—well, its content would have been shocking to some. I mean, there was no disembowelment. People were sipping tea, not coughing bile, and hunting for nice apartments instead of killer cyborgs.

This kind of paradigm shift, from blood and terror to love and wonder, can be seen at work in one of our most recent ongoing manga series, Osamu Takahashi's *Neon Genesis Evangelion: The Shinji Ikari Raising Project*. As the original *Evangelion* anime of the nineties ended in a literal apocalypse, it is sometimes forgotten today that the series also featured romantic comedy and gag humor, and that the final episode imagined what its characters might be like if they had been allowed to live happier lives—exactly the scenario *The Shinji Ikari Raising Project* plays out.

Clover, *Chobits*, and *Cardcaptor Sakura* are recent and upcoming Dark Horse titles by CLAMP, a partnership between four manga creators—Satsuki Igarashi, Mokona, Tsubaki Nekoi, and Nanase Ohkawa. CLAMP have brought their sensibilities developed in *shojo* manga—with its emphasis on turning emotion into action—to an international crossover readership of men and women alike.

We see this in *Clover*, set in a lush, baroque world of retro technology, where CLAMP uses the personal life of a special-forces agent to examine what love means when one partner (but not the other) knows that they are facing death. CLAMP's *Chobits*, about future love between people and the artificial humanoids called "persocoms," departs from the abstract SF debate about the humanity of robots to suggest the relevant question would be not what both sides truly are, but what they really feel about each other. *Cardcaptor Sakura*, a magical girl classic (and one might also say, a *shojo* take on how to do superheroes), is an action-packed saga that is also, in the words of *The Complete Manga Guide*, "about love in all its many forms: sibling love, childhood crushes, unrequited love, true love."

Few Dark Horse creators express love and wonder together so sumptuously as Mi-Kyung Yun, in her ongoing *manhwa* series *Bride of the Water God*. Its heroine Soah's struggle for love amidst the intrigues of the divine realm contains touches of modern humor and irony, but also references the classic romantic poetry of East Asia that contemplates the wonders of the earth and sky. In reading such scenes in *Bride*, you realize how much of the roots of fantasy are to be found in the fascinations of the real world, and that this wonder is open to anyone who will go halfway to meet it.

Love and wonder is that strange kind of adventure where the quest is for a midpoint, and the hope is finding someone who came there with the same desire. There are no guarantees; that is exactly what makes these Dark Horse stories—and this life—adventures, and not mere fairy tales.

—Carl Horn
Editor

You LOVE COMICS! WE LOVE COMICS, Too!

Mac Walters, lead writer at BioWare, has been hooked on interactive stories since first using a Commodore PET as a wee lad. Despite coming late to comics—blame video games—Mac's made up for lost time with the hit *Mass Effect* series, where he's enjoyed the novelty of writing a single ending per story.

DH alum (13 years!) **Dan Jackson** recently branched out on his own as a freelance colorist. He's a talented and very reliable guy, and we have to say, WE MISS HAVING YOU AT HQ, DAN! (Sorry for the yelling . . . had to make sure Dan could hear us over all that insane metal music.) Rocker salute!

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